

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L GENEVA 11133

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM
SUBJECT: RELOCATION OF ZAIRIAN REFUGEES WITHIN ANGOLA

REF: (A) GENEVA 10887 (B) GENEVA 9778 (C) STATE 171953

1. PURSUANT TO INSTRUCTION REF C MISOFF MET WITH LICROSS OFFICIALS ENSO BIGHINATTI (UNDER-SECRETARY GENERAL) AND SHIRLEY ROBERTSON (OPERATIONS DIRECTOR) WHO GAVE LENGTHY DESCRIPTION OF THE IMBROGLIO BETWEEN THE LEAGUE AND THE GOVERNMENT OF ANGOLA (GOA).

2. AFTER PRESENTING AN OVERALL PICTURE OF THE REFUGEE SITUATION, SUBSTANTIVELY THE SAME AS REPORTED IN REF A, PARAS 1 THROUGH 4, BIGHINATTI WENT ON TO EXPLAIN THAT, AT THE REQUEST OF UNHCR, LICROSS HAD REMAINED IN ANGOLA AND CONTINUED ITS OPERATIONAL ROLE DURING THE FIRST ZAIRIAN RESETTLEMENT. AT THAT TIME THE LEAGUE RAISED THE QUESTION OF ORGANIZING AN ANGOLAN RED CROSS WHICH COULD
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TAKE OVER THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO THE REFUGEES. THE GOA CONCURRED WITH THIS PROPOSAL AND PROMISED EARLY RECRUITMENT OF AN ANGOLAN STAFF TO REPLACE LICROSS. IT WAS ALSO AGREED THAT SEVERAL LEAGUE TECHNICIANS WOULD REMAIN IN LUANDA TO TRAIN RECRUITS AND TO HELP ORGANIZE THE ANGOLAN RED CROSS, WITH THE PROVISIO THAT ADDITIONAL LICROSS DELEGATES WOULD GO TO ANGOLA IN

AUGUST TO PROVIDE FURTHER ASSISTANCE TO THE BUDDING ORGANIZATION. UNFORTUNATELY, LICROSS COUNTERPART TECHNICIANS WERE REFUSED.

3. ACCORDING TO BIGHINATTI AND ROBERTSON THE LICROSS/GOA PROBLEMS STEMMED FROM LACK OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE ANGOLANS THEMSELVES. THIS WAS COMPOUNDED BY A LACK OF ORGANIZATION AND LIMITED KNOW-HOW ON THE PART OF THE ANGOLAN GOVERNMENT. NOTING THAT SUCH PROBLEMS CAN BE ANTICIPATED IN ANY DEVELOPING COUNTRY, BIGHINATTI AND ROBERTSON IMPLIED THAT THE DEGREE OF DISORGANIZATION WAS FAR GREATER IN ANGOLA THAN IN SOME OTHER LDC'S. THEY REPORTED THAT LEAGUE FIELD STAFF FOUND THE ZAIRIAN REFUGEES WHO WERE BETTER EDUCATED, FAR MORE COMPETENT AT ORGANIZING THE DISTRIBUTION OF SUPPLIES THAN THE ANGOLANS. FOR THIS REASON LICROSS USED THE ZAIRIANS IN MANY OF THE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS.

4. SPECIFIC PROBLEMS INCLUDED THE LACK OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL WELFARE (REF A PARA 7). WHILE ENTRY VISAS WERE BEING ISSUED TO LICROSS STAFF BY THE MFA, THE SOCIAL AFFAIRS MINISTER REFUSED TO LET THE RELIEF WORKERS TRAVEL TO EMERGENCY SITES. SOME LEAGUE PERSONNEL WERE FORCED TO REMAIN IN LUANDA FOR AS LONG AS THREE WEEKS. WITHIN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS, LOWER ECHELON STAFF DID NOT CARRY OUT DIRECTIVES FROM THEIR SUPERIORS AND OFTEN
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BLOCKED ASSISTANCE TO THE REFUGEES. BELIEVING THAT THEIR AUTHORITY WAS BEING THREATENED BY LICROSS, THESE LOW RANKING OFFICIALS FALSELY ACCUSED LICROSS OFFICIALS OF BEING SPIES.

5. THERE WERE, ACCORDING TO BIGHINATTI, PERSONALITY PROBLEMS BETWEEN SEVERAL GOA OFFICIALS AND SOME LICROSS PERSONNEL. CASUAL REMARKS MADE BY FOUR LICROSS MEMBERS LED TO THEIR BEING ASKED TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY. ONE OF THE FOUR HAD ASKED PERMISSION TO LEAVE ALMOST IMMEDIATELY UPON ARRIVAL IN LUANDA AND HAD DEPARTED A MONTH BEFORE BEING DECLARED PERSONNA NON GRATA.

6. AN ADDITIONAL PROBLEM FACED BY THE LEAGUE WERE GOA RESTRICTIONS ON NATIONALITIES. INITIALLY THE ANGOLANS WOULD PERMIT ENTRY TO SWEDISH NATIONALS ONLY. THIS BAN WAS FINALLY LIFTED AND OTHER NATIONALITIES WERE ALLOWED TO JOIN LICROSS.

7. CONCLUDING THE DISCUSSION BIGHINATTI AND ROBERTSON STRESSED THE POINT THAT LICROSS HAD NOT BEEN THROWN OUT OF ANGOLA. THE LEAGUE HAD WANTED THE GOA TO TAKE OVER THE ZAIRIAN REFUGEE OPERATION. A TRANSITIONAL PLAN IS NOW

MOVING FORWARD SLOWLY. LICROSS WILL CONTINUE TO OFFER ITS
SERVICES, BUT AS OF NOW THEY ARE WONDERING IF THE
ANGOLAN RED CROSS WILL BECOME A REALITY IN THE NEAR FUTURE.
VANDEN HEUVEL

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